

Land Stewardship Committee Meeting Minutes  
April 4, 2007  
Acton Town Hall

Present: Jim Snyder-Grant (chair), Nan Towle Millett, Tom Tidman, Rich Rhodes, Philip Keyes, Bob Guba, Peggy Liversidge, Bettina Abe, Laurie Ullmann, Joan Cirillo, Ann Shubert (minute taker)

Meeting Minutes: The March minutes were approved, after some discussion about process: see below for more.

Statement from the Chair: Jim spoke with most stewards prior to today's meeting as barbed emails have been exchanged recently. As a consequence of the emails he has written up a statement on respect, communications, and decision making. The statement has three points – in brief they are:

1. No decision-making or advocacy for LSC decisions by email.
2. Meeting discussions will be respectful.

And 3. Any stewards demonstrating a persistent inability to abide by 1 or 2 will be asked to resign  
after he has met with Tom.

This is not a policy but is the way Jim as chair plans to operate.

Adherence to Acton town staff's understanding of the Open Meeting Law also heavily discourages us from using email for committee business.

The group talked about how to describe respectful meetings in positive terms: listening; assuming the good intentions of the other speakers; keeping committee goals in mind in deciding how to respond.

It was noted that the 'no interruptions' statement doesn't apply to the chair, although the need to be respectful does.

The committee discussed how to handle minutes and email. It was agreed that suggested changes to draft minutes would be sent directly to the minutes taker, not to the whole group. The minutes taker will either incorporate the changes, or note what the suggestion is – and in any case the modified draft minutes, with possible annotations, will be an agenda item at the subsequent meeting. Where possible within the constraints of time, any modified or annotated draft minutes will be circulated by email prior to that subsequent meeting.

Jim announced that Gigi has resigned. He recommended that people that want to know more, and/or want to encourage her to return, should contact Gigi directly. The Committee was very sorry to hear of Gigi's resignation as she adds so much in person and in information.

Education and Publicity: The 'Enigma' talk was well attended. Robert Thorsen is available for a talk on stone walls in the fall. Philip will follow up on this.

Intertown Connections: Bettina Abe volunteered to be the Assabet river stewardship council volunteer.

Bettina updated the Committee on the Arboretum. There is a new trail around the lilac area that is being installed. Weston Nursery is donating lots of fragrant azaleas. Lenox will do the landscaping. Cards have been made listing plants in various parts of the Arboretum – a use of these cards might be that one could duplicate that certain part of the Arboretum at home. The cards were made courtesy of the Wharton Grant.

Laurie will go through the Bay Circuit Trail and make the Bay Circuit signs more consistent.

Intra-town Communications: Acton clean up day is on May 5 from 10-4. Laurie is in charge – let him know if you want to staff the table. April 28 is Earth Day. Jim will be staffing the table and would welcome help.

Projects – Billings Trail – Bob will speak to Bruce Stamsky re putting a crosswalk on Concord Road where the trail from Wood Lane ends.

Quail Update – Nan said the quail project was presented to the Conservation Commission and permission was given for further research. Stoneymeade is an ideal location for the quail as there is a lot of dense cover and a pond. David Scarpitti from MA Fish & Wildlife is an upland bird biologist. He would like to take a site walk. Jill Liske-Clarrk, also from MA F&W is a grasslands birds expert. She supports the project and will identify grass samples and suggest site improvements for successful reintroduction of the quail. Quail were native to the entire N.E. States in the past. Ellie Horwitz, Director of Education at MA F&W will help with the public education piece of the project. Nan is moving ahead with the project and when she has it together she will again present it to the Conservation Commission. Jim and Nan will keep in communication about when updates and discussions with the LSC would be appropriate.

Parcel News and Updates – The various parcels were discussed. Bob will order wood for more boardwalks at Nagog. Laurie said that an eagle scout is going to build a boardwalk at Nashoba Brook to take the place of the three sections that are often floating at high water. Jim said that he wanted to focus on two tasks: working with Tom to make a more up to date and complete list of Eagle scout candidates working on LSC-related tasks; and organizing a series of Garlic mustard pulling events this spring.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30. The next meeting will be on May 2 at 4:00 PM.